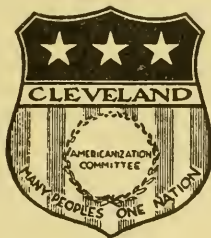


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# The Slovaks of Cleveland

With Some General Information  
On the Race

By  
ELEANOR E. LEDBETTER  
Librarian Broadway Branch  
Cleveland Public Library



Nineteen-Eighteen

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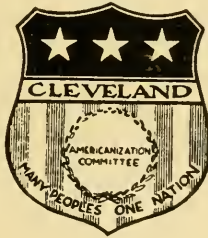
Under the Direction of the  
Cleveland Americanization Committee  
Mayor's Advisory War Committee



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## FOREWORD

AS THE work of the Cleveland Americanization Committee took on more definite shape, it seemed to separate itself into two divisions; first, bringing the foreign born residents into close touch with the language, customs and ideals of America; and second, giving to the native born Americans an understanding of the racial and political sympathies of the foreign born. Without a common understanding of the best each has to offer, no real fusion of new and older Americans will ever take place.

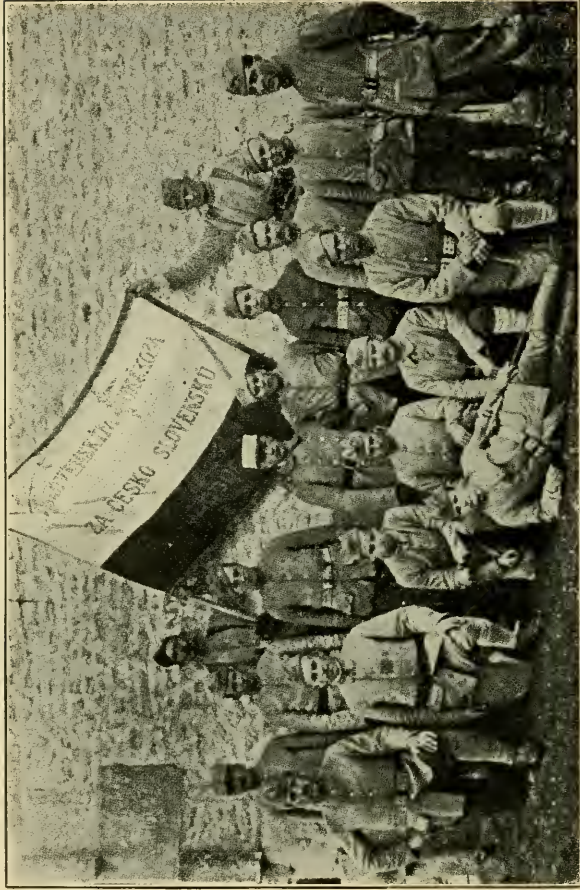
With this end in view, a series of articles has been planned, taking up individually the various races prominently represented in our cosmopolitan city.

“The Slovaks of Cleveland” is presented as the first of this series. It is very desirable that this race be better understood in view of the prominent part they are now bearing in world politics. The establishment of a Czecho-Slovak state will prove one of the best possible barriers to future German aggression, and the annals of the Czecho-Slovak army in Russia are full of achievement as heroic as any the world has ever seen.

The Czechs are well known by their English name, Bohemians, but there is very little general understanding of the Slovaks. The adjective “Slavish” which is sometimes used to describe them, has no standing in the dictionary and does not appear in any ethnological work. Their own adjective “Slovensky” has often led to their being confused with the Slovenians, who are an entirely different race. In the census they figure as Hungarians because born in Hungary, and in other records they appear as Austrians, because they have come from the Austro-Hungarian monarchy.

It is hoped that this publication may be effective in securing for them a better understanding.

HELEN BACON, Secretary.



Group of Slovaks in the Czecho-Slovak Army in France

## THE SLOVAKS *of* CLEVELAND

**I**N THE northern part of Hungary where the Carpathians slope toward the great Hungarian plain, is the country called by its children "Slovensko" or "Slovakland".

### **Racial Definition. History.**

This region, comprising sixteen counties of Hungary, is the home of the Slovaks, a historic race of solid character and exceeding industry, whose fate through centuries has been aptly summarized in the statement that they are "the very step-children of fortune."

It is a rough country, a country of mountainsides and valleys, and has been inhabited by this same race since the fifth century. In the year 863 the wonderful story of Christ was brought to the Slovaks by the apostles Cyril and Methodius. In 870 A.D. their nation came for a brief space into the limelight of history as the nucleus of the Great Moravian empire under Svatopluk, whose capital was the city of Nitra. This kingdom was disrupted by Germans and Magyars early in the next century, and for a thousand years the Slovaks have lived in a state of vassalage to an alien race, the victims always of oppression and suppression.

That under these circumstances they have been able to maintain their own language and their national traditions through so great a period of time indicates a remarkable tenacity, both mental and spiritual. Their only fellowship has come from the west,—from their neighbors, the Moravians, and from the Czechs (here commonly called Bohemians), who live west of the Moravians. The Moravians and Bohemians use the Czech language. The Slovak tongue, while it is counted a distinct language, is yet so much akin to the Bohemian that mutual understanding is easy. This historic fellowship, so long continued, now looks to find at the end of the present war, political fruition in the establishment of an independent Czecho-Slovak state.

Hungary is the name of a political division. There are four principal races within its confines, besides others of less numerical importance. The dominant race, generally known in America as Hungarians, are from a racial standpoint more correctly called Magyars. Then there are the Germans, with whom the Magyars are hand in glove; while the step-children are the Rumanians in southeastern Hungary, and the Slovaks in the northwestern part.

The Slovaks number more than 2,000,000 souls, possibly even 3,000,000, but this can only be estimated, as the official census is notoriously unjust to all but the ruling race. Throughout Hungary there are occasional "islands" of Slovaks, but probably 2,000,000 at least live in the district called "Slovensko".

### **Economic Conditions.**

This country is, except in certain limited portions, rough and rocky, with considerable forests. The valleys and fertile lands are mostly owned by the lords and nobles, absentee landlords all, or by the church, and to these the peasant must give a certain number of days' work free each year. The roughest portions, the shallowest soil, the mountainsides, uncultivable



to the western eye, are the farms of the Slovak peasant. In the spring and fall, manure is painfully, toilingly carried in baskets up the steep slopes to furnish food for the coming crops.

The prosperous "rich" peasant owns at most a dozen acres, not in one plot but in strips, often miles apart, so that the labor of cultivation is multiplied manifold. The poor peasant may try to make a living from a part of an acre. Failing to succeed in this, he leaves his wife and children to cultivate the home plot, while he seeks employment abroad, usually as an agricultural laborer in the plains of Hungary or he may go to the Eldorado, America.

Money the Slovak peasant has only twice a year,—when he returns from this outside employment and when he harvests his own crops. But he does not have this long, for the tax-collector takes most of it. If he has been more than usually unfortunate, and has no money, the tax collector takes his household goods; for kindness of heart or consideration for the individual or the community does not influence the tax collector in Hungary.

**Food.**

The staple foods of the Slovak are black bread, the flour a mixture of barley and rye, potatoes, cabbage, milk and cheese, and maize meal (corn meal). Breakfast consists of black bread and a thin corn meal porridge. Dinner is a soup thick with noodles or vegetables, or cabbage cooked in a rich gravy. If the soup was made with meat, as happens sometimes, but not often, then the meat is used as a separate dish. In the better parts of the country, there is a good supply of such vegetables as beans, peas, carrots, and turnips. Supper



usually consists of potatoes with sour milk, or a corn meal mush with sour milk. Cottage cheese is much used.

The fruits of the temperate climate, apples, plums, cherries, and apricots, all are said by the exile to be particularly well flavored in eastern Slovensko, and wild strawberries abound there. Children gather them and sell them for two cents a quart. Huckleberries are also plentiful. Sheep cheese, called *brindza*, is a favorite article of food, and before the war was imported and sold in a few Cleveland stores. Mushrooms are much used. Plum brandy and juniper brandy are home made drinks considered to have medicinal as well as social qualities. Delicious pastries called *kolace* and *pasky* are luxuries to be enjoyed like white bread, only on occasions such as Christmas, Easter, wedding and christening celebrations. Meat is always a luxury, and one of the frequent recommendations given by immigrants to America is that here there is "meat every day". Salt is a government monopoly, ordinarily sold at ten or twelve cents a pound.

### Education.

If the peasant's circumstances are passable and he does not live too far from a town, he may send his children to school for four winters. The length of this term is determined by agricultural conditions. It is usually from November to about April, because the children must help to wrest a living from the soil. Children have to work from an early age, usually from about six years of age and they do work which we would consider it not only cruel, but impossible to ask from our children. As one Cleveland child of Slovak parentage has said, "My father says his children can never know how much better their childhood is than his was". For their work, children are paid about five dollars a year, and the day is from sunrise to sundown.

During these four terms of school, the Slovak child will receive instruction in Magyar,—a foreign tongue, the language, not of his fathers, but of his oppressors,—a language which the Slovak hates and never uses, except under compulsion. He says with justice that the Slovak tongue will take him all over the Slav world, while the Magyar has no value outside of Hungary. Consequently, the child, studying in a hated language, which has for him no daily use, learns very little, and finishes his four terms of school almost as ignorant as he began. It is for him exactly what it would be for us now if our children were compelled to receive their education in German. Never-the-less, he must in self-defense learn some Magyar, since he will never be sold a railroad ticket nor a postage stamp unless he asks for it in Magyar.

A peasant who is both prosperous and ambitious, who is willing to sacrifice what few comforts he has, and to bend every resource to one purpose, may choose the brightest of his children for a "higher education". For that the child must be sent to the city and pay tuition, besides board and other expenses. This can be done only if the would-be scholar himself seizes every opportunity and creates opportunities as well, to help himself and to add to the meagre allowance from home. Great is his responsibility. If he should fail, it is failure, not for one person only, but for all the family hopes.

And from the beginning he must go with an outward acceptance of Magyarization. The students, Slovak though they may be, are allowed to converse in nothing but Magyar, even in their most private moments. Always there are monitors whose duty it is to spy upon and betray their comrades and the school authorities do not hesitate to search rooms and trunks for such

highly incriminating articles as a little book of Slovak poetry, or a bit of handwriting in that language. Even a student of theology is likely to be dismissed from the seminary and his whole career blasted if he shows any interest in the language of his own home and of his future flock. There is one clergyman in Cleveland to-day who twice saw fellow students meet this fate and who came to America because he was "discouraged" in consequence.

### **Military Service.**

After graduating, the student has the privilege of volunteering for military service, if he does so immediately, and as a volunteer he can go into the army on terms which make it possible for him to become an officer in the reserves at the end of a year. If he does not volunteer, however, he is summoned for service on the same terms as his brothers, who served for three years from the age of twenty-one.

The treatment of privates in the Austrian army is unbelievably cruel. In the first place, the poor Slovak must speak in German whether he knows how or not. To answer in Slovak is one of the offences which may bring him a slap across the face, or cruel confinement in the guard-house. Sent to the guardhouse for some utterly trivial offence like failing to salute perfectly or having his shoes not shining in the requisite degree, or speaking in Slovak, he may be given bread and salt to eat and denied water for two or three days. Or his right arm may be fastened to his left leg with clamps, and he kept in that position for a day or two. A favorite punishment is to hang him up by a sort of harness under the arms, drawn up so that his toes barely touch the ground. He will be kept so until he grows black, then taken down, revived with a bucket of water and hung up again. Many commit suicide under these punishments.

The soldier's pay is about three cents a day,—hardly enough for the absolutely required shoe-polish, needles and thread and polish for his brass buttons. He must have help from home during his whole period of service at a time of life which ought to be most productive. It is quite obvious that he gains no new loyalty to his rulers, except that which is instilled by fear.

### **The Making of Emigrants.**

These conditions of political disaffection, of economic difficulty, of oppressive taxation, with the denial of political representation, of language and of education, naturally make for emigration, once a goal has been discovered. The first Slovak emigrants to America, reporting that here they found "good wages, better living, and free schools, to which any human being can go" were naturally followed by others, until emigration became for some districts almost an exodus.

To these people the freedom of America was a discovery almost as great as the land itself had been to Columbus. What more natural than that they should soon begin to work toward freedom as a possession of the whole Slovak race. This desire found united expression in the formation in May, 1909, of the Slovak League, whose purpose is to promote the cause of liberty for the Slovaks everywhere.

### **Slovak League.**

Since the beginning of the great war, this League has actively exerted itself to direct public sentiment so as to secure for the race just treatment at



OPERETTA OBĚTOŠOVA DĚČKA  
14. APRILA 1918 CLEVELAND, O.  
KRIVAN

BY J. JABLONS

Slovak Choral Society, "Kriván," Presenting Operetta by Local Composer, Dr. M. Francisci  
Courtesy of "Obrana"

the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy; and to hasten that event by every possible means. This activity has of course redoubled since the entrance of the United States into the war, and especially since President Wilson expressed himself in favor of self-determination of races and governments. "Nove Slovensko" is a weekly newspaper just started (June, 1918) in Cleveland to promote the objects of the League.

The Slovaks of this country have wisely joined forces with the larger Bohemian organization in the fight for racial freedom, and a combination of working forces has been effected in the organization of the "American Branch of the Czecho-Slovak National Council". This Council consists of eight delegates each from the Slovak League and from the Bohemian National Alliance. Mr. John Pankuch of Cleveland is a member of the Council.

"The Bohemian Review" of March, 1918, makes this poignant statement: "Whereas Bohemian immigrants in America constitute considerably less than ten per cent of their race, one-fourth of the whole Slovak people live in America. The Bohemian National Alliance does not and cannot speak for the Czech nation, for the Czechs in the old country have their own accredited and regularly elected deputies. But the Slovaks of Hungary have no elected representatives, and those who emigrated to America must speak for the whole race". The president of the Slovak League is Albert Mametej, of Braddock, Pa., secretary, John Jancek, an editor from Russia, now in Pittsburgh.

Under the direction of the Council, the Slovaks share in the organization and maintenance of the Czecho-Slovak army. A recruiting office is maintained in Cleveland at 5286 Broadway. Men who are not of draft age, or who, because of their technical classification as alien enemies (being nominally subjects of Austria-Hungary) are not eligible to service in the United States army, are the recruits.

This army is trained at a camp in Stamford, Conn., financed by the Council. As soon as the soldiers embark for France, their expenses are met by the French government which understands Austria's internal affairs enough to realize, as our government has not done, that Austria's bitterest foes are those who have grown up under her sovereignty. In France the Czecho-Slovaks fight under French officers, but with their own organization, and carrying their own flag. (See illustration on page 4.)

All Slovaks drafted for service in the United States army have waived exemption, and they are among the most spirited of our soldiers, since they have not only the patriotic motives which animate the rest of our army, but in addition a very vigorous determination to pay off some of the old scores.

### **Slovak Immigration to America.**

The first considerable number of Slovaks coming to America was 1,300 in 1873. The largest number in any one year was 52,368 in 1905. Cleveland was a destination for some from 1880, but up to 1886 most of their number settled in the hard coal region of Pennsylvania, in the districts around Wilkes-Barre and Scranton. Now they are scattered very widely through the whole United States, with a few groups in Canada. About half the whole number, however, still is found in Pennsylvania, with Ohio or Illinois probably second in number, and New York, New Jersey and Connecticut following.

Slovaktown, Arkansas, is an agricultural community built up by Slovaks who earned the money for their initial venture in the Pennsylvania coal fields.

Wherever they have settled in this country, the Slovaks have undertaken the hard, heavy labor, the work fundamental to our great industries. Owing to their lack of previous opportunity, they have always had to fall into the ranks of the unskilled, where their dogged industry and perseverance have made them valuable, and their uncomplaining submissiveness has sometimes made them the subjects of exploitation.

The question naturally arises why more of them do not go to the country, when practically all were agriculturists before emigration. Two answers are offered in reply to this question; first, that the weekly pay envelope is irresistibly attractive to people who had had so little money to handle in the old country; and second, that in the city, the women also can work.

Among the Slovak immigrants, it has been very usual for the man of the family to come first, often not intending to stay permanently. It was to him simply a greater migration than the former habitual one to the plains of Hun-

## City of Cleveland and SUBURBS

STREET LINES  
STREET CAR LINES  
CITY LIMITS



Cleveland, Indicating Slovak Centers

- |                          |                          |                                 |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. St. Ladislav's Church | 4. St. Wendelin's Church | 8. St. Joseph's Church          |
| 2. Holy Trinity Church   | 5. Nativity Church       | 9. Martin Luther Church         |
| 3. St. Martin's Church   | 6. St. John's Church     | 10. First Baptist Slovak Church |
|                          | 7. St. Andrew's Church   |                                 |

gary. Miss Balch shows in "Our Slavic Fellow-citizen" pictures of "American" homes in Slovensko, built by returned emigrants with the proceeds of American toil. Many others, however, have on return found themselves so changed as to be out of place in the old surroundings. An "American", returning to Hungary, is a thorn in the flesh to the officials, to whom he no longer doffs the hat nor kisses the hand. In consequence, passports for the second trip are often obtained more easily than they were for the first, and the man who went home to stay, shortly severs all ties and brings his family to America with him.

Others, without the experience of returning, analyze things for themselves and conclude, "Why should I go back?"

### **After the War.**

When the war comes to an end, there will however be a great exodus, caused by the desire for immediate and accurate news of relatives, friends and homes from whom the separation has been complete for so long. There are in Cleveland more than 600 Slovak men whose families in Hungary were dependent upon remittances from this country. The agonizing situation of these men, so long without news and with so little reason for hope, is such as to make them subjects for the keenest sympathy. It is safe to say that there is hardly a Slovak in Cleveland who has not mother, wife, children, or sisters in the old country, and who will not wish to see with his own eyes what the war has done to them. How long he will stay depends upon economic and political conditions which it is impossible now even to forecast.

### **Distribution of Slovaks in the United States.**

The distribution of Slovaks in the United States is a subject on which it is not possible to present any figures, as the census records do not indicate the race, but count them in with all the other emigrants from Hungary.

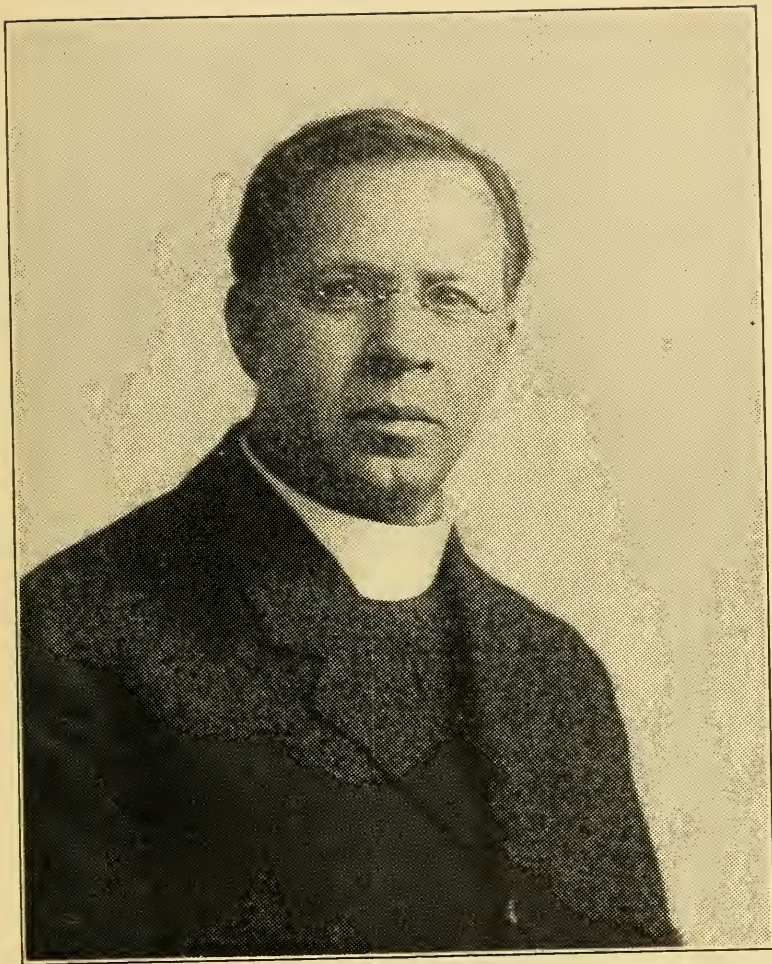
Two methods of approximation of local populations are available: first, the records of the Slovak churches in the United States; for the Slovaks are a religious people, and there are comparatively few without a church connection. Second, the records of the various societies, mostly beneficiary, which are organized on a nationalistic basis; that is, only persons of Slovak ancestry are eligible.

The establishment of a new Slovak church obviously means the presence of a number of Slovaks sufficient in means and interest to buy property and to maintain an institution. Similarly, the formation of a branch, or "lodge", of a fraternal organization indicates the existence of a group able to meet and pay dues, and desirous of receiving the benefits of the organization.

### **Distribution of Slovaks in Ohio.**

The distribution of Slovaks in Ohio is indicated by the following list of towns which have branches of one or more of these societies:

Adena	Belle Valley	Cambridge	Congo
Amsterdam	Berea	Canton	Conneaut-Jester
Ashtabula	Black Top	Castalia	Danford
Ava	Bradley	Cincinnati	Dayton
Barberton	Buffalo	Clay Center	Dillonvale
Barton	Byesville	Cleveland	Dover
Bellaire	Caldwell	Coalridge	East Toledo



Courtesy of "The American Bohemian Daily"

"The Father of the Slovaks"

**REV. STEPHEN FURDEK**

For Thirty-three Years a Much Loved Pastor in Cleveland

Fairport	Lorain	Murray City	South Lorain
Glencoe	Lowellville	Neffs	Steubenville
Gypsum	Lucasberg	Pine Fork	Stewartsville
Haselton	Mansfield	Pleasant City	Struthers
Hubbard	Marblehead	Port Clinton	The Plains
Kelley's Island	Martin's Ferry	Ramsey	Toronto
Kipling	Massillon	Rhodesdale	Walkers
Klondyke	Maynard	Robins	Wolf Run
Laferty	Middletown	Rossford	Wheeling Creek
Leetonia	Mingo Junction	Roswell	Yorkville
Lore City	Moxahala	Salem	Youngstown

Cleveland became a goal for Slovak immigrants as early as 1880. Jacob Gruss (see illustration on page 18), who with his wife came to America in that year, was advised by a Bohemian employment agent in New York, to proceed to the mining regions of Pennsylvania. Mr. Gruss preferred to work above ground, so the agent said, "Why not go to Cleveland? That is a new city, with lots of work."

Arriving here, Mr. Gruss, who now lives at 9627 Stoughton Avenue, found one fellow countryman, a man named Roskos, already here. In 1881 a few more Slovaks came to Cleveland, in 1882 a larger number.

### **"The Father of the Slovaks."**

In March, 1882, arrived the Rev. Stephen Furdek, the first Slovak priest in America. By a curious turn of fate, he came, however, to minister to the Bohemians. Bishop Gilmour, of the Roman Catholic diocese of Cleveland, had written to Prague for a priest for his rapidly increasing number of Bohemian parishes, and Father Furdek, although a Slovak, only 24 years of age, and barely through his theological studies, was chosen to answer the call. He arrived here in March, 1882, and was ordained to the priesthood July 2nd, in St. Wenceslaus Bohemian church, of which he became the pastor. Two years later, he was given the task of organizing the new Bohemian parish of Our Lady of Lourdes, which soon became the largest Bohemian parish in the city, and where he remained until his death, Jan. 18, 1915.

While successful to the highest degree in his appointed work among the Bohemians, Father Furdek was a man of such breadth of interest, of such large ability, and of so much executive talent, that he was able from the first to act also as a leader of the Slovaks. Becoming first the friend and counsellor of the few whom he found already in Cleveland, his interest grew and broadened until he became a national figure, and was everywhere affectionately known as "The Father of the Slovaks."

### **Slovaks in Cleveland.**

There is no official record which will show the growth of our Slovak population, but in a general way it can be estimated and localized by reference to the history of the Slovak churches of our city. By following their development, it is possible to learn in what parts of the city Slovak centers have developed, and at what time each new community has increased to the point of forming a new religious organization.

In 1885 Father Furdek began holding Slovak services regularly in the chapel of the Franciscan Brothers on Woodland Avenue, and so brought together into a religious body the little group of Slovaks in Cleveland at that time.





St. Ladislav's Roman Catholic Church

These first Slovaks had settled in the district around Hill, Berg, Commercial, and Fourth Streets, but Father Furdek urged very strongly that they find a more desirable location for their permanent home. Through his influence a location was chosen in what was then the outskirts of the city, along Buckeye Road and parallel streets from about East 78th Street to Woodhill Road. Here the settlement rapidly grew, the Slovaks building small, neat cottages.

In 1887, the collection of funds for a church was begun, and an organization was effected Dec. 2, 1888. As there were Magyars living in the same neighborhood and also in need of a church, an attempt was made to combine the two interests, and the parish was named for the Magyar saint, St. Ladislav. It was not long before difficulties began to arise between the two races, and eventually great bitterness developed. The ensuing contest was settled by the Bishop, who decreed that the Magyars should build themselves a new church, and that the Slovaks should pay them \$1,000 for their interest in St. Ladislav.

In recent years this neighborhood has changed very much, and the small homes of the Slovaks have been largely crowded out by tenements, so that sixty-five per cent of the original population have now moved farther out.

New property has been acquired on East Boulevard, at the foot of Sophia Avenue, where it is planned first to erect a new school building, to be followed later by a new church and other parochial buildings. The present parochial school houses about 700 children, who are taught by the Sisters of Notre Dame.

### **Holy Trinity Evangelical Congregation.**

The next Slovak parish organization was a Protestant one, the Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Congregation, founded Dec. 5, 1892. This was the third Slovak Lutheran parish in the United States, the first having been in Freeland, Pa.

Holy Trinity parish was established in the down town district, and although the character of the local population has entirely changed several times, the original location still seems most convenient to this congregation. The church is at 2506 East 20th Street, where the parishioners find it easy to come from all over the city.

There is a parochial school where two teachers give instruction to 65 children in the work of the first four grades. For more advanced work, the children go to the public schools, and attend special instructions in religion and the Slovak language four hours a week in the parochial school. Additional property has recently been acquired to furnish a playground for the children of the school.

While this church is one of the oldest Slovak organizations in the city, it is an interesting fact that about half of the present congregation are immigrants of the past six or eight years.

The pastor, Rev. Alexander Jarosi, is a Slovak from southern Hungary. Educated in a Hungarian university, his coming to America was due to the fact that at the very moment when he was feeling most bitterly the governmental oppression of his native land, he received a letter from America telling him of the great need for Slovak ministers here. Mr. Jarosi is keenly interested in assisting the men of his congregation to become American citizens,

and deplores the fact that so far his Hungarian birth and his rank as an officer in the Austrian army, have caused the refusal of his various applications for service in the United States army.

### **St. Martin's Church.**

In the same neighborhood as Holy Trinity Church, the Roman Catholics founded St. Martin's Church two years later, in 1894. This was first located on East 25th Street; in 1902 a church was built on East 23rd Street, and in 1907 a larger one was erected at the corner of East 23rd and Scovill Avenue. The old church is used as a school building, and three dwelling houses have also been altered into school rooms. Five hundred and fifty children are enrolled, the teachers being the Sisters of St. Joseph. Two young men from this parish are now studying for the priesthood.

The development of these three parishes may be taken to indicate the character and location of the first phase of Slovak immigration to Cleveland.

### **Nationalistic Societies.**

During this period from 1880 to 1894 the Slovak population of the United States increased in very much the same proportion as did the Slovak population of Cleveland, and in 1890 sufficient impetus had been gained to lead to the establishment of the first of the nationalistic societies which are so large a feature of Slovak life in America.

### **National Slovak Society.**

February 16, 1890 marked the beginning of the movement. On that date was organized in Pittsburgh under the leadership of P. V. Rovnianek, "The National Slovak Society of the United States of America." (*Narodny Slovensky Spolok v Spojenych Statoch Americkych*). Its aims, as stated in the "Constitution and By-laws, 1916," are:

"To educate the Slovak immigrants, who, being victims of unfavorable political conditions in their own country, were deprived of the means of education and culture; to make of its members all sons of their nation; to teach them to love their adopted country and to become useful citizens of this Republic; to help one another in sickness and distress and to help the widows and orphans when their breadwinners have passed away."

The duties of members as defined by the By-Laws, include the following: "He must lead a moral life, make an honest living, and refrain from acts which would bring disgrace upon the National Slovak Society, and dishonor to the Slovak race." "It shall be the duty of every member to become a citizen of the United States within six years after his admission to the Society. If he neglects to do so, a complaint shall be filed against him in the Supreme Court."

Five "funds" are maintained: Mortuary fund, for the payment of death benefits; administration fund, for the running expenses of the organization; indigent fund, for the relief of disabled members who have exhausted the benefits to which they are entitled from their local societies, but who are in extreme want; a national fund, for "the moral development and for the uplifting of the honor and good name of the Slovak nation"—from this students may be educated and national purposes promoted; an orphans' and old folks' home fund.



First Convention of the First Catholic Slovak Union—Cleveland, Sept. 4, 1890  
 \* Jacob Gruss, Cleveland's First Slovak

The official motto of the society is "Freedom, Justice, Brotherhood." It has 700 branches, widely distributed throughout the United States and Canada, with 42,259 members, and 7,500 junior members. 6,513 members have died, and their beneficiaries have received \$4,527,804.96. Sickness and accident benefits paid have aggregated \$85,228.86. The present capital is \$1,870,869.56. Albert Mametej, Braddock, Pa., is president and Joseph Durish, Pittsburgh is secretary.

"Narodny Noviny" (National News) a weekly newspaper, is the official organ of the society. The Literary Committee is a standing committee of the society, whose duty it is to provide for the publication of useful books for the members.

### First Catholic Slovak Union.

On the fourth of September of the same year, another society of similar aims was started in Cleveland by the Rev. Stephen Furdek. The first convention was held in the home of Jacob Gruss, and was attended by eleven delegates (see illustration on this page.)

This society was called the First Catholic Slovak Union (Prva Katholicka Slovenska Jednota) and its membership is limited to Roman Catholics or Greek Catholics in good standing. Its headquarters are in Cleveland, where the secretary has a suite of offices in the Guardian Building.

"Every member of this Union shall become a citizen of the United States within six years after his arrival in this country, and as a true son of the Slovak nation he shall cultivate the Slovak language and nationality inherited from his forefathers, preserve it for coming generations, and thus become worthy of his ancestors." (Extract from the Constitution.)

The first Catholic Slovak Union now has a membership of 50,049 with 19,690 junior members. It has paid out in benefits \$5,000,000 and has a capital of \$1,532,671.49. The capital of the junior society is \$57,513.21. A. J. Pirhalla, Duquesne, Pa. is president, Michael Senko, Cleveland, secretary.

The distribution of branches is as follows:

Pennsylvania.....	302	Minnesota.....	6	Arkansas.....	2
Ohio.....	72	Missouri.....	6	Wyoming.....	1
Illinois.....	55	Colorado.....	6	Louisiana.....	1
New York.....	33	Maryland.....	4	Georgia.....	1
New Jersey.....	29	Washington.....	3	Oklahoma.....	1
Connecticut.....	20	Maine.....	3	New Mexico.....	1
Wisconsin.....	13	Montana.....	3	Virginia.....	1
Michigan.....	12	Massachusetts.....	3	Alabama.....	1
West Virginia.....	9	Kansas.....	3	California.....	1
Indiana.....	7	Iowa.....	2	Canada.....	7

“Jednota” (Union), the official publication, was started by Father Furdek as a small sheet in 1890, and was edited in Cleveland continuously for the first ten years, and intermittently since, the annual convention determining the place from year to year. It is a weekly paper, taken by all members, and is now published in Middletown, Pa.

### **The Catholic Slovak Ladies' Union.**

This is a society for men; the Slovak women were no more to be outdone than their American sisters would be, so they founded in January, 1892, “The Catholic Slovak Ladies' Union” (Katolicka Slovenska Zenska Jednota). The organization and by-laws are like those of the brother organization. They have capital to the amount of \$429,049.48, of which \$240,000 has been invested in Liberty Bonds. There are 388 branches, having a total of 26,044 members, with representation in 26 states and Canada.

The headquarters of the Union are in Cleveland, where Mrs. Anna Ondrej, 3134 East 94th Street, is national president, and Mrs. Maria E. Grega, 9619 Orleans Avenue, is general secretary. The official organ “Zenska Jednota” (Ladies' Union) is edited and published at 5103 Superior Avenue by the chaplain, Rev. John M. Liscinsky.

### **The Slovak Evangelical Union.**

Naturally the next organization to be founded was of the opposite religious faith, the Evangelical. The Slovak Evangelical Union (Slovenska Evanjelicka Jednota) was founded in Freeland, Pa. in 1893. Its objects also are fraternal. Its capital is \$230,225; it has paid out in death benefits for men \$741,674; for women \$77,755; for accidents, \$43,399. It has 199 branches, and 58 junior branches, 10,584 members.

Its headquarters are now in Allegheny, Pa. The president is Jan Matta, Brownsville, Pa.; secretary Jan B. Bialek, 1601 Beaver Ave. Pittsburgh.

Its official publication is Slovensky Hlasnik (Slovak Herald) published weekly in Pittsburgh. This also serves as organ for the sister society, the Evangelical Slovak Ladies' Union.

The Evangelical Union has been unfortunate in the matter of unity, and an offshoot from it is the National Slovak Western Union, with head-

quarters in Chicago, and the Evangelical Slovak Union, founded in 1909 in Cleveland, of which John Pankuch of Cleveland is president and Stevan Alusie, of 1928 Mead Avenue, Racine, Wis. is general secretary.

### **Cleveland Slovak Union.**

A local organization along the same lines but non-sectarian in membership is The Cleveland Slovak Union, founded in 1899. It has in Cleveland 26 branches, with 1367 members and a capital of \$49,485. The main society pays death benefits only, the branches pay also accident and sickness benefits. The president is George Putka, 2626 East 130th Street.

The objects of the Cleveland Slovak Union are stated as follows: "To educate the Slovak people, who have been deprived of the privilege of education by unfavorable circumstances in their fatherland; to foster intelligence among the members, to teach them to love the new fatherland, and make useful American citizens of them; to support the widows and orphans in case of the death of members."

### **Sokols.**

Another motive, that of physical culture and training, is a prime object in the Slovak Gymnastic Union Sokol (Telovicna Slovenska Jednota Sokol). This had on May 1st, 1918, 10,838 members, most of the chapters being in the states of New Jersey, New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Illinois. Its headquarters are in Perth Amboy, New Jersey, where it was organized July 4th, 1896. The president is Stephen Erhardt, Bridgeport, Conn., the secretary Frantisek Stas, Perth Amboy.

"Slovensky Sokol" (Slovak Falcon) published semi-monthly at 1424 Vyse Ave. New York, keeps the members in touch with the organization.

"The Roman and Greek Catholic Gymnastic Slovak Sokol Union" (Rimsko a Gr. Katolicka Telovicna Slovenska Jednota Sokol) is a similar organization limited to a Catholic membership. It was organized in 1905 in Passaic, N. J., has 15,000 members, \$100,000 capital, and owns a printing establishment valued at \$15,000. Its publications are "Katolicky Sokol," weekly, and a monthly juvenile periodical, "Priatel Dietok".

Each of these national orders has many branches and hundreds of members in Cleveland, and it is doubtless due to their beneficiary features in addition to the natural thriftiness of the race that the number of Slovaks who appear as applicants for charitable aid, is extremely small.

The great danger seems to be that an individual may take out membership in more societies than he can afford to carry.

The meeting places of these various "lodges" are often in the parochial school buildings, or in rented halls equipped for that purpose.

### **Slovak National Home.**

The "Narodny Slovensky Dom" (Slovak National Home) Corporation erected in 1906 a building at 8804 Buckeye Road to serve as a general center for Slovak organizations and activities. Its management has unfortunately not been entirely successful, and its ownership is now vested in M. N. Soboslay, a prominent Slovak, who regards it as held in trust for its original purposes.

## **Second Stage of Growth.**

The second stage in the growth of Cleveland's Slovak population is indicated by the fact that at the end of ten years, the three churches already described, St. Ladislav, Holy Trinity, and St. Martin's, were no longer sufficient to care for the needs of the race, and a new era of church building set in.

### **St. Wendelin's Church.**

A settlement had grown up on the West Side, which was formed in May, 1903, into the parish of St. Wendelin. The original settlement was in the district bounded by West 17th and West 22nd Streets, Lorain Avenue and Columbus Road. More recently the Slovaks have moved into the old Lincoln Heights neighborhood, between West 5th and West 11th Streets. There are also about 80 Slovak families near Denison Avenue.

The present church of St. Wendelin was built in the year of the parish's organization, and has for some time been inadequate to the needs of the greatly increased membership. Property has been purchased at Columbus Road and Freeman Avenue where new buildings will be erected after the war. The parochial school of St. Wendelin has 900 pupils, the teachers belonging to the Sisters of Notre Dame.

### **St. John's Church.**

In 1905 the parish of St. John on West 11th Street was founded. It has so far had a chequered history, due to a lack of approval on the part of the Roman Catholic bishop of the Cleveland diocese. It is now affiliated with the Independent Diocese of Scranton, Pa. under the Right Reverend Francis Hodur, and has a settled pastor in the person of the Rev. Stephen Vincent Tokar, a young American, the son of Slovak parents, born in Pennsylvania.

A fine church building is just about to be begun, and the parish seems to be on the threshold of a brighter future.

### **Nativity Church.**

The same influences of industrial opportunity and increased immigration which led to the establishment of St. Wendelin's, had also been the occasion of great growth at St. Ladislav, and the extension of its territory to an unwieldy extent. As a result, the parish of St. Mary of the Nativity was formed in 1903. This is east of the Newburg plant of the American Steel and Wire Company, in the neighborhood of East 93rd Street and Aetna Road. While conveniently near the mills for the men who are employed there, the land is so much higher that the air is clean and clear. It is a district of home owners, of comfortable single or two-family houses, neat yards and well tilled gardens. Its orderly development has been inspired since 1909 by a pastor who is a true shepherd of his flock, the Rev. V. A. Chaloupka.

This year the spirit of neighborhood improvement was so general that over 6,000 ornamental shrubs were set out, besides small fruit and shade trees.

The Nativity school building erected in 1916, is built according to the most improved models, and possesses features which make it a genuine community center. Its large auditorium, which seats 800, is in use every Sunday evening, and often during the week. Sometimes the dramatic club gives a play, sometimes there is a lecture on some topic of the hour, sometimes a dance with an attendance of 250 couples, but oftenest the entertainment

# CLEVELAND CLERGY OF SLOVAK BIRTH



REV. JOHN M. LISCINSKY  
St. Andrew's Roman Catholic Church



REV. PAUL BEDNAR  
First Slovak Baptist Church



REV. L. A. JAROSI  
Holy Trinity Evangelical Church



REV. ALBERT D. DIANISKA  
Martin Luther Evangelical Church



provided is moving pictures. Father Chaloupka chooses the films, and intersperses the instructive with the merely entertaining. One night last winter 1,100 people enjoyed moving pictures depicting religious scenes.

The bowling alley is a feature of the school building much appreciated by the young men of the neighborhood, and the women have classes in the various branches of domestic science and in Red Cross work.

Night school classes in English and citizenship were held last winter under the direction of the Americanization Committee, Father Chaloupka having himself previously taught citizenship classes, also acting as witness for his men in naturalization court.

### **St. Andrew's Church.**

The youngest Roman Catholic Slovak church in the city is St. Andrew's on Superior avenue, near East 55th street. This also is to some extent an outgrowth of St. Ladislav parish, many of the families having moved to this neighborhood because of its nearness to their employment in the various large manufacturing plants north of Superior avenue, on Lakeside avenue, and along the Nickel Plate tracks. They are buying homes in the neighborhood as fast as the former residents are willing to sell. . . This parish was organized in 1906, the church was dedicated in 1907. Rev. John M. Liscinsky, who has been rector since 1908, has the distinction of being the only Roman Catholic priest in the city who is Slovak born, the others being Bohemians and Moravians.

### **Martin Luther Evangelical Congregation.**

The Martin Luther Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Congregation was founded in 1910, and used a dwelling at 2139 West 14th St. as a church until 1917. The four-hundredth anniversary of the Reformation was celebrated by this congregation with the opening of their new church. The structure is of red brick, very pleasing in style. The Slovak Protestants trace their history back to the reformation of John Huss, so in the decorations of this church the coat-of-arms of Martin Luther is balanced by "The Cup", the emblem of the Hussites.

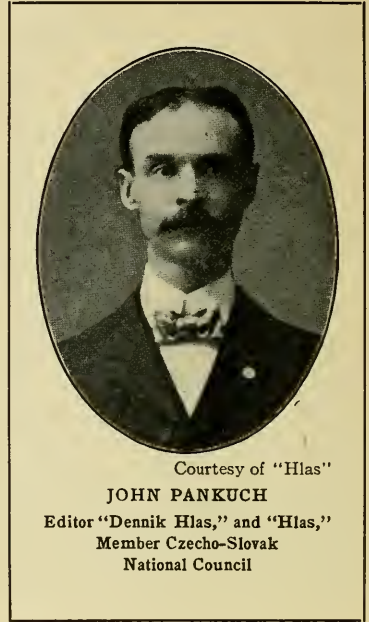
Rev. Albert D. Dianiska, the pastor, is a Slovak, whose father and grandfather before him were Lutheran ministers. Mr. Dianiska has in his library manuscript volumes of devotion which they used in the dark days of religious persecution, in Hungary when meetings could be held only in secret, and printed books were not available.

### **Greek Catholic Church.**

In a religious survey of the Slovaks, consideration must also be given to the Greek Catholic Church. This is a church whose existence is hardly known to Americans, much less understood by them. It is a result of the efforts of the Roman Catholic Church to convert the Greek Orthodox Russians. In the year 1595, this effort reached a degree of success among the Little Russians (or Ukrainians), who consented to acknowledge the supreme headship of the Pope, and to accept the *filioque* clause in the creed, on condition of being allowed to retain various practices of the Eastern Church. They retain the mass in Slavonic instead of in Latin, the Eastern arrangement of the church, with the great gilt screen in front of the altar, the communion in both kinds to the laity, the married clergy, the Eastern form of the cross, with three cross-bars, the lowest oblique, the Cyrillic alphabet, and the calendar thirteen days behind the Roman. Most of the Little Russians are Greek Catholics;



**REV. V. A. CHALOUPKA**  
Nativity Church



Courtesy of "Hlas"

**JOHN PANKUCH**  
Editor "Dennik Hlas," and "Hlas,"  
Member Czecho-Slovak  
National Council

so also are those of the same race who live across the border in Galicia and in the adjoining part of northern Hungary. In Hungary this race is called by various names; perhaps Ruthenian is the best known. They are a Slav race, akin to the Slovaks, who adjoin them on the west. It is quite natural that where they meet and mingle, there should be mingling of religious faiths. Consequently a considerable number of Slovaks are Greek Catholics, but it is very difficult to get accurate information on the subject, so far as Cleveland is concerned.

It is noticeable that in every Slovak community there is a Roman Catholic church; then later a Greek Catholic church is formed in the same neighborhood. St. John the Baptist Greek Catholic Church on Scovill Avenue, which has recently gone over to the Greek Orthodox communion, and the Church of the Holy Ghost on Kenilworth Avenue near West 14th Street are undoubtedly made up in part of Slovaks. St. Joseph's Greek Catholic Church on Orleans Avenue near East 93rd is almost entirely Slovak, while it is probable that other churches of that faith have some representatives of the race.

These Greek Catholic Slovaks are most unfortunately situated in this country, since it is very difficult for them to obtain any clergy. They must accept clergy who are either Magyar or Ruthenian, and the consequence at present is a great amount of dissension. It seems a far cry from Ukrania's peace treaty with Germany to a church quarrel in Cleveland. But the connection becomes apparent and urgent when the priest calls himself a Ukrainian with all that that may imply as to political sympathies; while the parishioners are devoted heart and soul to the Czecho-Slovak cause and do not hesitate to call Ukrania's separate peace a treason to the general cause.

There are several Protestant missions among the Slovaks. The Baptists have two, of which the larger has a neat church building at College and Tremont Avenues, the pastor of which, the Rev. Paul Bednar, is himself a Slovak. There are without doubt also Slovak members in every Protestant Bohemian church in the city.

**Present Day Statistics.**

Having surveyed the growth and location of Cleveland's Slovak population as indicated in the history of the Slovak churches, we may take the church statistics as the only existing basis for a computation of their numbers at the present day.

The Roman Catholic clergy record the size of their parishes by the number of families, and then estimate the number of individuals usually by figuring five persons to a family. The Lutheran pastors record the actual number of contributing members, which may be taken to mean usually heads of families. Five is a very conservative figure to use as a multiple, since Slovaks all have large families, ten or twelve children being not at all unusual.

The figures thus obtained make the number of Slovaks in Cleveland about 35,000 as follows:

St. Ladislav's parish.....	4,000
Holy Trinity parish.....	2,500
St. Martin's parish.....	3,500
St. Wendelin's parish.....	5,000
St. John's parish.....	2,500
St. John the Baptist parish.....	3,500
Nativity parish.....	2,500
St. Andrew's parish.....	2,000
Martin Luther parish.....	3,000
St. Joseph's parish.....	1,000
Other churches.....	3,500
No church connection.....	2,000
	<hr style="width: 100%;"/>
	Total 35,000

The location of these churches indicates the principal centers of the race in Cleveland. The different neighborhoods show the variations incident to the length of residence in this country and consequent financial condition. All Slovaks have come here poor and industrially unskilled, and the first generation can seldom do more than establish the family economically. Their children must work as soon as they are able and help to secure the family's financial footing. This includes always the ownership of a home, the purchase of property being particularly satisfying to the Slovak because it is something he could never have hoped for in the old country. The percentage of home owners varies from about one-third in some districts to over three-fourths in others.

Three Slovak building and loan associations assist in the acquisition of property. They are:

- The Tatra Savings and Loan Association.....2437 Scovill Ave.
- The First Slavonian Mutual Building and Loan Association.....9722 Buckeye Rd.
- The Orol Building and Loan Association.....12509 Madison Ave.



Bowling Alley at Nativity School

### **Slovaks in Industry.**

While the location of their churches indicates the principal centers of the race in the city, the original determination of that location was usually due to its accessibility to manufacturing plants offering employment in the kind of work which Slovaks are best able to do. The Slovak of Cleveland, like the members of his race elsewhere, furnishes the fundamental heavy labor for many of our largest industries. They constitute a large proportion of the pay-roll in such plants as the American Steel and Wire Company, the Corrigan-McKinney Co., the Cleveland Hardware Co., the Ferry Cap and Screw Co., the National Carbon Co., the Mechanical Rubber Co., and the Upson Nut Co. Their homes are therefore located in districts from which they can easily reach these plants.

Many of the young women work in cigar and candy factories.

### **Slovak Citizenship.**

As soon as the Slovak has decided to make this country his home, he takes out "citizen" papers and becomes an American. His doing so is stimulated by the regulations of the fraternal society to which he belongs and by his pastor.

The clergy of the Slovak parishes in Cleveland are entitled to great credit for the influence which they exert in behalf of Americanization. Several of them have personally conducted citizenship classes, taking their men to the court for examination; while others have exerted their influence to have their men take advantage of existing agencies in schools, libraries, etc. This year (1917-18) classes in English and citizenship were conducted under the direction of the Americanization Committee, in the parochial schools of St. Wendelin, St. Ladislav, and Nativity, and in the church of the Holy Ghost.



"Movie" Night at Nativity School



Exhibit of Pupils' Work at Nativity School

At St. Wendelin's a kindergartner was provided to take care of the little children of the mothers who attended.

At least one-third and in some districts a much higher percentage of the Slovak men are American citizens.

### Slovak Publications in Cleveland.

Intelligent citizenship is greatly assisted by local newspapers in their own language. "Dennik Hlas" (Daily Voice) and the weekly edition "Hlas" extend to all Slovaks the sturdy Americanism and the true patriotism of the editor, Mr. John Pankuch, who is known among Slovaks throughout the United States. It is published at 634-638 Huron Road.

"Nove Slovensko", published at the same address, under the editorship of Ignace Gessay, is devoted to the interests of the Slovak League.

"Zenska Jednota", (Woman's Union), a semi-monthly, and "Obrana" (Defense), an illustrated periodical, are published at 5103 Superior Avenue by the Rev. John M. Liscinsky.

The following books in Slovak have been published by Cleveland authors. The list is doubtless incomplete. The Americanization Committee will be glad to receive additions to the list:

- Furdek, Stephen. . . . . Kde se vzal svet?  
160 pages, illustrated.
- Furdek, Stephen. . . . . Svet a jeho zahady.  
1910. 249 pages, illustrated.
- Furdek, Stephen. . . . . Slovak text books for use in Slovak schools.
- Horvath, Frantisek. . . . . Sbirka slovenskych piesni. (Slovak songs with music.) published in Leipzig.
- Marshall, Gustav. . . . . (pseud-Petrovsky). Abrahamova obet; translated from the Dutch of Gustav Jansson.
- Marshall, Gustav. . . . . (pseud-Petrovsky). Z pod zanejov Americkych.
- Salva, Karol. . . . . Tovarysstvo. 3 volumes.
- Konig, Janko and Pankuch, Jan. . . . . Slovensky humoristicky kalendár pre americkych Slovakov na rok 1915.
- Wolf, Antoin. . . . . Hlupy Janko.

### Other Slovak Publications.

- Other Slovak publications of general interest are:
- "How to obtain citizenship" in English and Slovak;
- "Slovensko-Americky vencek" (Slovak-American song-book).
- "Slovak-American Interpreter. Novy Anglicky Tlumocnik pre Slovakov v Amerike".

These are all publications of the Slovak Press, 166 Avenue A., New York.

- Dixon, Charlton. . . . . Slovak grammar for English speaking students.
- Mametej, Albert. Novy Americky tlumac. (New American Interpreter).

These were both published by Rovnianek in Pittsburgh in 1904.

- Kadak, P. K. . . . . Obrazkove dejiny Ameriky (History of the United States).  
Scranton, Pa. 1908.

- Nyitray, Emil. . . . . Slovensko-Anglicky a Anglicko-Slovensky vackovy slovník. (Slovak-English pocket dictionary).

Mr. M. N. Soboslay has a Slovak book store at 9722 Buckeye Road, where he carries books in that language from all over the world.



Choir of St. John's Church in Native Costume for Dramatic Performance  
With Rev. S. V. Tokar

**Public Library.**

The Cleveland Public Library has 450 Slovak books, which are in constant use among the Slovaks of the city, many of whom also read the larger collection of Bohemian books in the Library.

**Slovak Education in America.**

The Slovak, who had so little opportunity for education in his own childhood, appreciates very highly the facilities open to his children in the schools of this country. It is seldom financially possible for him to send them farther than the grammar grades in the first years of life in the new country, but of course that represents a great gain over what would have been possible in Hungary. With the acquisition of homes and comfortable living conditions, the number of children in high school increases very rapidly. A good many have graduated from business schools, and gone into office work instead of following their fathers into the factory.

There are as yet only a few professional men among the Slovaks: The following are apparently the only ones:

J. C. Ferencik, and Gustavus C. Gilbert, attorneys.

M. Francisci, a physician at 3242 Lorain Avenue, and Dr. John A. Filak, now in the United States service. Dr. Francisci is also widely known as a musician and composer.

**The Slovak as an American.**

As a member of the community, the Slovak has in a high degree those qualities of character which make the solid substantial citizen. He is naturally conservative, and not inclined to seek changes in the social order,



Martin Luther Evangelical Lutheran Church





# Slovak Newspapers and Periodicals

*Published in the United States.*

## Daily

Dennik Slovak v Amerike.....166 Ave. A, New York  
 Narodny Dennik.....4th & Penn Ave., Pittsburgh, Pa.  
 New Yorksky Dennik.....502 East 73rd St., New York  
 Denny Hlas.....634-638 Huron Rd., Cleveland

## Semi-weekly

Slovak v Amerike.....166 Ave. A, New York

## Weekly

Amerikansko-Slovenske Noviny.....4th & Penn Ave., Pittsburgh  
 Jednota.....Middletown, Pa.  
 Bratstvo.....9-11 E. North St. Wilkes-Barre, Pa.  
 Slovensky Hlasnik.....1601 Beaver Ave. N. S., Pittsburgh  
 Rovnost Ludu.....1510 W. 18th St., Chicago  
 Slovensky Pokrok.....309 E. 75th St., New York  
 Hlas.....634-638 Huron Rd., Cleveland  
 Narodne Noviny.....514 Fourth Ave., Pittsburgh  
 Katolicky Sokol.....263 Monroe St., Passaic, N. J.  
 Youngstownske Slovenske Noviny...239 E. Front St., Youngstown, Ohio  
 Zurnal Spojenych Majnerov.....1103 Merchants' Bank, Indianapolis  
 Nove Slovensko..634-638 Huron Rd., Cleveland  
 Nove Casy.....1702 So. Halstead St., Chicago

## Semi-monthly

Obrana.....1276 E. 59th St., Cleveland  
 Slovensky Sokol.....1424 Vyse Ave., New York  
 Zenska Jednota.....1276 E. 59th St., Cleveland  
 Prehľad.....Middletown, Pa.

## Monthly

Svedok.....Streator, Ill.  
 Zivena.....2007 S. Ashland Ave., Chicago  
 Kruh Mladeze N. S. S.....524 Fourth Ave., Pittsburgh  
 Slovenska Mladez.....Box 1704, Pittsburgh  
 Ave Maria.....Box 2301, Bridgeport, Conn.  
 Prehľad.....Mt. Pleasant, Pa.  
 Priatel' Dietok.....115 Hill St., Boonton, N. J.  
 Udalosti Sveta.....Hazleton, Pa.  
 Dobry Pastier.....78 Brook St., Bridgeport, Conn.



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